

NL

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REMEDIAL & ENFORCEMENT  
RESPONSE BRANCH

October 28, 1988

Mr. Steve Frederick  
Office of Public Affairs  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
230 South Dearborn Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Re: Granite City, Illinois  
Remedial Investigation Report

Dear Mr. Frederick:

I am writing to bring your attention to a problem respecting the actions of your office in connection with the October 12, 1988 information session on the above-referenced report, and subsequent press releases. First, with respect to the information session, NL Industries, Inc., the company who is responsible for preparing the Remedial Investigation ("RI") report pursuant to U.S. EPA's administrative consent order, did not have official notice of the date of the information session or of the information to be presented at the session, specifically, the contents of the fact sheet.

With respect to the fact sheet, NL objects to the apparent emphasis placed on the 300 ppm level for lead-in-soil. The fact sheet, by proclaiming the 300 ppm level as a "Federal" agency standard, left the public and the media with the impression that it was the level favored by the U.S. EPA.

NL had never even reviewed the document ascribed to ATSDR in the fact sheet. Indeed, when NL asked its EPA contact for the ATSDR report, he had no copy of it. The RI report did refer to a 1985 CDC document discussing a 500-1000 ppm lead-in-soil level. Taking into account the CDC level, the risk assessment in the RI report nonetheless recommended a 1510 ppm level for lead-in-soil. This level was not even mentioned in the fact sheet.

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EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.



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Thus, the fact sheet was not consistent with the RI report in three significant respects: (1) it made no reference to the RI's recommended level of 1510 ppm; (2) it did not mention the CDC report referenced in the RI report; and (3) it called attention to an ATSDR report not cited in the RI report.

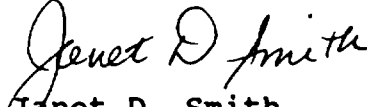
The difficulties inherent in these inconsistencies were compounded by NL's lack of notice of the information session and of the fact sheet. Lacking any advance notice of the information session and the contents of the fact sheet, NL was placed in the awkward and embarrassing position of having to field questions from television reporters and other journalists about what was perceived as a 300 ppm standard for lead-in-soil. This unfortunate situation could have been avoided by affording NL advance notice of the contents of the fact sheet and of the scheduling of the information session.

The problem of inadequate communication between EPA and NL continues. Recently, we received a newsclipping referencing a 500 to 1000 ppm level for lead-in-soil, and containing a diagram depicting an area surrounding the Granite City smelter as a "danger area." This article illustrates, we think, the potential misleading effect of the public dissemination of incomplete information.

Finally, you should be aware that the purpose of the risk assessment contained in the remedial investigation report is to investigate and establish level for lead-in-soil. There is no "standard."

In conclusion, we have heard that EPA is planning to mail to residents in the vicinity of the Granite City smelter an information sheet. In light of the history of confusing communications disseminated to these people, NL believes that it should be afforded the opportunity to comment on this and any future mailings.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Janet D. Smith

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c: Regional Administrator  
Roger Grimes, Esq.

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